



**CLEANING UP AFTER HURRICANE SANDY**  
**Gowanus Canal Area**  
November 2, 2012

On October 29, 2012, during Hurricane Sandy, a portion of the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn, New York overtopped its banks, causing the flooding of some area residences and businesses. The water receded after the storm. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency immediately conducted a visual inspection of the length of the canal and the surrounding area and did not observe sediment on the streets. The EPA also collected samples of standing water from several buildings and will make the results public as soon as they are available.

The Gowanus Canal is contaminated by PCBs, coal tar waste, heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and bacteria from many years of industrial discharges, spills, storm water runoff and combined sewer overflows. The site was added to the federal EPA Superfund list of the nation's most contaminated sites in March 2010.

If you live near the Gowanus Canal and experienced flooding from the canal during the storm, there are simple steps to follow in cleaning up:

- Remove or pump out standing water.
- Use bleach to kill germs
  - Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves and goggles.
  - Open windows and doors to get fresh air when you use bleach.
  - Clean hard things with soap and water. Then clean with a mix of 1 cup of household liquid bleach in 5 gallons of water. Use bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon). Scrub rough surfaces with a stiff brush and air dry.
  - If you don't have household liquid bleach, use soap and water.
  - NEVER mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners.
- Wash clothes worn during cleanups in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately than uncontaminated clothes.